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OUR HEALTH SYSTEM IS CRUMBLING SAY POLES

Poles are among the most pessimistic people in Europe about the future of their country's healthcare system over the coming decade according to a new survey.

Only one in seven Poles say their health system is good at meeting individual needs, the lowest proportion of any country surveyed. Of the 11 EU countries polled by Populus for the Stockholm Network think-tank, Poland receives the lowest overall mark, 3.8 out of 10, a full 0.6 behind the next lowest ranked country, Slovakia.

Health System: Marks out of 10	
France	6.9
Netherlands	6.7
Spain	6.7
Britain	5.9
Sweden	5.8
Italy	5.8
AVERAGE	5.6
Czech Republic	5.3
Germany	5.1
Hungary	5.1
Slovakia	4.4
POLAND	3.8

On five key performance measures, Poles rank their health system lower than everyone else, including neighbouring countries in central and eastern Europe.

- Just 12% say that their health service is good on waiting times, less than half the survey average of 23%
- Only 20% think it is good at treating people at a time and place to suit them
- And, only 22% see it as good at using the latest drugs and technology to treat people.

Poles are also the most likely to believe that other European health systems work better than their own, with 90% thinking things must be better elsewhere.

How do other European health systems perform compared to your own? (INFERIORITY COMPLEX)				
	Better	The same	Worse	Better minus The same/worse

POLAND	90	4	5	80
Hungary	78	14	9	55
Slovakia	73	12	15	46
Czech Republic	65	26	10	28
Italy	63	26	11	26
Britain	60	29	12	19
AVERAGE	54	26	20	8
Spain	42	35	26	-19
Germany	38	27	35	-24
Netherlands	34	41	25	-32
Sweden	24	43	34	-53
France	20	31	48	-59

Adding to the inferiority complex, three quarters of Poles (75%) view their health system as underfunded, the highest proportion surveyed, outside of Slovakia, and 75% would be prepared to go abroad for treatment if their health system paid for it.

-ENDS-

NOTES TO EDITORS

- *Poles Apart? Eastern European attitudes to healthcare* by Helen Disney (ed.) is published by the Stockholm Network priced £10. The Stockholm Network is a unique service organisation for Europe's market-oriented think tanks and thinkers. A full PDF file of the survey can be downloaded at: www.stockholm-network.org.
- The Polish launch of the survey will take place in Warsaw on Monday 6 June at 10am at La Boheme - Plac Teatralny 1. The event is jointly hosted by the Independency Foundation and the Stockholm Network. To RSVP for the launch, please email: Terence O'Dwyer terry@stockholm-network.org or Tomasz Teluk tomasz@teluk.net
- Populus conducts monthly polls for *The Times* among other clients. It interviewed 1000 people representative of age, gender and region in each of Poland, Hungary and Slovakia over the phone between 17 January and 7 February 2005, and in each of the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden over the phone between 26 January & 22 February 2004.